

The Individual

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MEETINGS

Talk by Chris Tame on *Prospects for Liberty*

Wednesday, 21 February at 6.30 for 7 pm

The next meeting of the Society for Individual Freedom will be on Wednesday, 21 February 1996 at 6.30 for 7.00 pm in The Queen Elizabeth Room, Westminster Arms, 9 Storey's Gate, London, SW1. This is on the opposite side of Parliament Square to the Palace of Westminster and about equally accessible from either Westminster or St. James's Park underground stations.

The speaker will be Chris Tame, and the subject *Prospects for Liberty*. As many members will know, Chris Tame is a leading libertarian thinker, activist, and writer. He was among those responsible for keeping ideas of individual freedom alive when Marxism and Statism were taken for granted by the majority of the intellectual establishment, and he has a vast knowledge of libertarian ideas and literature. This will be a very interesting talk.

Members may bring guests. Please pass on details to anyone you think might be interested in coming.

Annual General Meeting

Monday, 11 March 1996

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, 11 March 1996 at 5.45 for 6 pm in the Jubilee Room at the House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1. The AGM of the Society will be followed by a brief meeting of the National Council.

Please allow time for security checks when entering the Palace of Westminster by St. Stephen's entrance (if asked, you are going to Sir Richard Body's meeting) and please bring some means of identification.

For further details, see page 14, under the heading *Notices*.

EDITORIAL

In the previous edition of *The Individual*, August 1995, we regretted the fact that basic scientific methods were *not* applied to political questions. In fact it seemed that there was something of a reverse influence, if anything — some parts of science are being corrupted by politics.

As the contributions for the current edition accumulated it seemed I was inadvertently getting some excellent examples of the absence from government policies of that essential scientific requirement — “coherence,” or consistency of ideas from different areas.

Ideas that were strongly supported in some areas were apparently ignored or positively denied in others.

“Government” was overdone in some places and had to be replaced by “privatisation,” but in other areas — particularly the sacred cows of health and education — privatisation had to be permanently excluded.

Freedom of choice was encouraged in supermarkets and travel agents, but very positively discouraged if applied to the leaves and sap of certain (God-given?) plants such as tobacco, poppy, coca, cannabis, and vines.

Information is a “good thing” so long as it is not about government function or a threat to influential professional interests.

It looked as if the political field was littered with inconsistencies and incoherences. A really happy hunting ground for the logician and the satirist. The reader can decide the appropriate treatment for the few examples studied here.

But then I realised that the situation was nothing like as bad as it seemed at first sight. Coherence could be achieved very easily. Stop looking at reason. The unifying principle is the extension of government and bureaucratic power and influence. Looked at that way coherence is restored and politics makes sense again.

Paul Anderton

DRUGS FOR DEBATE

Michael G. Jones

for *Victims of Tranquillisers (VOT)*

The media constantly report tragic deaths "related" to drugs in headlines such as: "Banish Drug as Lethal as Crack, Demand Doctors"; "Leah Betts Takes a Single Ecstasy Tablet and Dies"; "I was a Zombie for Ten Years"; "A Drug Mix Roasted a Raver to Death"; "Thirty Five Million Pounds Spent on Drug Claim"; "Horrendous Withdrawal Symptoms"; "Brain Damage Associated with Long-Term use."

Then we read that a doctor (Marks or Szasz, for instance) has called for hard drugs to be legalised, and so allow controlled suppliers to put an end to criminal drug dealing. In theory that's fine. But with headlines like the above to scare and confuse naive electors, one would be justified in accusing the government of going completely out of its election prospects mind if it took their advice.

In fact over half of the headlines and reports relate to *legalised drug taking*.

Drugs prescribed by your doctor/psychiatrist can have equally disastrous consequences as drugs purchased from some back street drug pusher. The effects on mind and body are substantially the same.

Look in particular at this headline: "Banish Drug as Lethal as Crack, Demand Doctors." It referred to the benzodiazepine tranquilliser Temazepam for which millions of prescriptions had been written over the previous 10 years or so.

In a bid to tackle the misery and despair caused by its misuse, the government announced that doctors will be unable to prescribe capsules of temazepam, only tablets, from 1st January 1996 and from then on it will be a criminal offence to be in possession of any capsules.

In justification of this the government asserted that the gel-filled capsules have been at the root of a crime wave in Scotland; and in other areas misuse had resulted in some serious problems. On Merseyside doctors reported a wave of deaths and amputations attributed to injecting the gel. "Young addicts are coming to us in absolute agony with their legs turning blue because blood vessels have become blocked. Often there is nothing we can do but amputate. We have antidotes for drugs like heroin but not temazepam."

Temazepam is a benzodiazepine. So are Valium, diazepam, Mogadon, Ativan and Lorazepam, to name just a few. We have also had Halcion/Trialozam which was taken off the market in 1985 as well as over ten other benzodiazepines declared not available on the N.H.S.

The Committee on Safety of Medicines, reporting on current problems, January 1988, said there has been concern for many years regarding benzodiazepine dependence (e.g. British Medical Journal 1980, 280, pages 910-912). Such dependence is becoming increasingly worrying. Benzodiazepines are indicated for short-term use: "two to four weeks only."

Also from another medical text "benzodiazepine withdrawal syndrome should be considered a serious medical illness usually requiring in-patient treatment."

Large doses make the sedative withdrawal syndrome more severe and it can be life-threatening.

The controlled drugs deaths register for 1992 gives 370 *benzodiazepine-related deaths* and this is almost certainly an understatement.

There have been three Early Day Motions tabled in Parliament about the dangers of benzodiazepines and related issues: E.D.M. 1726 (30.3.93); E.D.M. 128 (30.11.93); and E.D.M. 752 (08.03.95). Many MPs expressed extreme concern.

There is the benzodiazepine litigation for those seeking compensation for their suffering; the cost of the litigation so far is £35 million.

There are about 80 claimants still fighting on in the High Court without legal aid under the title of "Victims Of Tranquillisers."

The issues established are:

- (1) Benzodiazepines have been on the market for over 30 years.
- (2) They can cause a medically recognised illness.
- (3) They are potentially addictive.
- (4) There are over 40 known side-effects attributed to their ingestion.
- (5) On receipt of prescription, no accompanying information leaflet on these subjects is provided.
- (6) Withholding such information knowingly inevitably gives rise to grave concerns.

Obscuring the truth threatens the rights of the individual to freedom of choice and long-term peace of mind. One cannot have peace of mind over *new wonder* drugs, with claims of their being non-addictive and having very few side-effects, for instance. But to read that Prozac or Ritalin was marketed after only 6 weeks of trials gives rise to concern. A report says that during ingestion some patients had homicidal responses, were suicidal, and had convulsions. But Prozac, in particular, has been widely credited with near-magical powers over anxiety and other discontents, and described as the "happiness drug" by some media enthusiasts.

There are also reports of powerful psychiatric drugs being doled out to "difficult" children — with horrifying results even though parents have been persuaded to "cooperate." Their use in prisons is also an area that needs close scrutiny. I know of one case, at least, where Prozac resulted in the opposite effect to that intended — but such cases are far too easily covered up.

I have concentrated largely on Temazepam because it was originally considered perfectly safe mainly on the grounds that fatal overdoses were virtually impossible in contrast with some other benzodiazepines. Other methods of "misuse" were certainly not anticipated, in spite of assurances about "care" and extensive testing. When "misuse" was discovered there was a very long delay in taking preventative action.

It is doubtful if much real progress in the effective safety and control of prescription drugs has been made in

the last 30 years. Other later formulations will almost certainly follow much the same cycle of promise followed by disillusion, with many casualties on the way — what an interesting contrast with the attitude to the (mostly natural) drugs of free individual choice.

Michael Jones was himself treated with Valium/diazepam 1978-88 which he eventually realised was having debilitating effects. Benzodiazepine poisoning was diagnosed for him in 1988. Three years of withdrawal followed which was an awful

experience, particularly as he had to effectively rebuild his life as well, needing to "dig into himself" which produced a feeling of considerable relief when it was achieved. He read in a newspaper of legal action against manufacturers of benzodiazepines in Jan. 1993, saying legal aid had been withdrawn due to rapidly mounting costs (i.e. the £35 million).

Michael contacted Dr Reg Peart and they started VOT as a support group for the many similar cases.

EDUCATION

Walt Hare

Mention education in political or media circles and what springs to mind? Probably a captive audience of children available for having various compulsory subjects imposed on them. The most heated discussions have been around subjects such as history, religion, and literature with team games as a recent addition.

There is a bland and unchallenged assumption that children not only can, but should, be actively pressurised, through the educational system, to adopt specified attitudes and habits. But the fact that such policies **are** changeable and subject to disagreements should raise doubts about imposing one interpretation on this captive audience.

An enquiry as to why something supposedly so valuable and essential as education actually needs to be compulsory — on the face of it a rather strange start in life for citizens of a "free society" — is likely to produce surprise that the question is asked at all, then a justification on the lines of "obviously everybody needs to know how to read and write and do basic mathematics so it must be compulsory" — an apparently reasonable justification.

But in practice, even after 11 years of "education" a considerable proportion of school leavers are hardly literate and still seriously mystified by even elementary mathematics. The introduction of the National Curriculum was intended to establish universal standards and to some extent has in fact done so, at least in comparison with those existing in many schools previously, particularly those in deprived areas.

The trouble is that the aim of increasing standards has been frustrated because the National Curriculum and the 16+ GCSE examination have been strongly influenced by the trendy professionals who were largely responsible for the previous lowering of standards.

If you take time off from the essentially peripheral debates about religion, games, and Shakespeare and actually look at the GCSE syllabuses and examination papers, then you should be very disappointed by the effects of reform. Taking the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science the standards are well below those of the old "O" level. English is still almost entirely "literary" with no specific tests of grammar, punctuation, spelling, or straightforward, clear descriptive writing. In particular there is a complete absence of use of language as a tool of thought or reasoning — the emphasis is entirely on communication and "self-expression."

The harder topics in mathematics such as calculus and even quadratic equations have been dropped completely as has the requirement for formal proofs. The nearest approach to proof is "show how you obtained your answer." So the idea of mathematics as a logical structure is simply ignored in favour of empirical methods. So far as science goes, the factual content is just about satisfactory, but there is no systematic study of scientific method.

If the core subjects were adequately taught, particularly critical and analytical thought, *there would be no need to teach other subjects*. Anybody with these basic abilities would be quite capable of acquiring such knowledge by their own efforts. There are plenty of books on history, literature, music, and drama as well as clubs and societies devoted to them outside schools to say nothing of quality TV programmes.

The tragic death, whilst going to the aid of a pupil attacked by a gang outside his school, of the headmaster, Philip Lawrence, of St. George's School, Maida Vale, on 8th December '95 produced the surprising assertion from a spokesman that schools "could not be expected to solve social problems — only to educate." Well, if schools are not supposed to solve social problems then that's a surprising change of attitude that should be a big relief to taxpayers. Education has always been assumed to be an important factor in solving "social problems." Its function in supposedly preparing children for adulthood, equipping them for work, introducing "culture" (that's what the non-basic subjects were for, wasn't it?), and "showing them how to live in a community (the school)" are surely relevant to causes and cures of "social problems." If not what is it for?

I can remember the situation in markedly different conditions. In 1970 I bought a house from a man who was an industrial manager. In the course of general conversation he remarked that he had "set on" (employed) three men *even though there was no actual work for them at the time*. Labour was so scarce at that time that virtually anybody could get a job for the asking. Unemployment, instead of being visible on the streets, was invisible behind the factory gates and office doors (and very likely in the boardrooms of superfluous industries as well).

Then, lazy or uninspired pupils pointed out that "there was no point in education because anybody can get a job without it" whereas now the excuse is that there is no point in education because "you *can't* get a job anyway." Quite

a few pupils in the 1970s "voted with their feet" by leaving early, usually for jobs such as shop workers or waitresses, which their present-day counterparts would be very pleased with. They were chased back by attendance officers, usually to the disappointment of their teachers as well as themselves. Nowadays they are bribed and starved into continued "education" through the benefits system.

In neither case did educationalists say in effect "all right then if you don't think education is any use, don't bother. We'll close some schools, dispense with a lot of teachers and administrators and save a lot of money." Not likely!

Now "education" is supposed to be a great help in getting a job. Then, in the early '70s, it was supposed to

enable the rewards of employment, such as money and leisure, to be more exquisitely appreciated. (If any of those fortunate pupils of the 1970s are now among the prematurely redundant and unemployed, I hope they are making good use of their cultural education!)

In fact the age-related compulsory system is positively damaging. If there is any compulsion at all it should be for the attainment of minimum *standards* in the basic subjects after which pupils should be able to stay or leave according to their and their parents assessment of the relative benefits of that compared with other opportunities.

As well as ensuring a *properly* educated population this would much improve the motivation of both pupils and teachers.

BOSNIA: THE HIDDEN CAUSES

Peter Jackson

Observers of the Bosnian tragedy find it hard to understand the sudden eruption in a previously peaceful society and the ensuing barbaric behaviour of man to his neighbour. New research has unearthed the source of the same techniques which facilitated the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people.

Like all conflicts, the humanitarian catastrophe in Bosnia did not just happen, but was created. After long periods of peace one community does not turn viciously on another without considerable effort on someone's part to bring both sides into conflict. It is well accepted that, as had happened before in Germany, violent feelings were whipped up by politicians against a people with an ethical code and a sense of their own identity. But, just who were these politicians, and who worked so hard to create the necessary social and emotional conditions for war? The methods and allegiances of those concerned have until recently remained hidden.

Research by the Citizens Commission on Human Rights, including over 1000 hours of video evidence, has now revealed the real causes of the war and the horrifying parallels with the genocide in Germany half a century earlier.

There are five new aspects to the wickedness in Bosnia and all five involve *psychiatry or psychiatrists*.

Prior to the outbreak of war, and the subsequent ethnic cleansing, Serbian psychiatrists had close working links with and were trained by the Group Analytic Society (GAS). This is a branch of the Tavistock Centre in Britain which is known to be involved in psychological warfare research, group psychotherapy and "brainwashing" experiments.

The role of these and other psychiatrists was seminal in creating the hysteria in former Yugoslavia which precipitated war and genocide. For instance, GAS-trained psychiatrist Jovan Raskovic established a pseudo-scientific theory which purported to explain the superiority of the Serbs over what he called their "inferior" ethnic neighbours.

"I have noted that Muslims are fixated on the anal phase and this phase is psychologically characterized by the activity of meditating, and is intrinsic to their character. Their personality has a tendency to appropriate things, dominate like a boss, value people by their possessions, their money, their social positions, etc. This anal phase is also characterized by aggressiveness." — Jovan Raskovic, "Mad Country," 1990.

As was done in Germany, the minority was portrayed as a threat and at the same time labelled as inferior which made crimes against them easier both to contemplate and to justify.

Raskovic set up a Serbian nationalist movement partly under the leadership of fellow psychiatrists and psychiatric patients which set about the persecution and ethnic cleansing of Moslems and Croats, using Raskovic's psychiatric theories as the "scientific" justification. This work was carried on by Raskovic's pupil, psychiatrist Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader who has since been indicted for war crimes by the United Nations. Meanwhile the Serbian president Milosevic is one of Karadzic's ex-patients and the whole Serb leadership is riddled with psychiatrists and their patients.

Serbian psychiatrists manipulated the Serbian population into a paranoid state of mind in which violence against a minority came to appear justified and reasonable. Why psychiatrists again? Perhaps this can be better understood in relation to the cornerstone statement by psychiatrist Brock Chisholm, co-founder of the World Federation of Mental Health (WFMH). WFMH was formed by the mental hygiene movement after the term "mental hygiene" became such a public relations liability subsequent to their activities in Germany. Chisholm stated that, "One of the objectives of practically all effective psychotherapy" was "The re-interpretation and eventually eradication of the concept of right and wrong."

With society's institutions infiltrated and taken over, and with no concept of right and wrong to guide them, they could be manipulated by psychiatrists. Psychiatrists such as Raskovic and Karadzic could exploit their positions and bring about the wholesale rape, torture and murder of innocent women and children and the destruction of a whole nation.

"I feel responsible because I made the preparations for this war, even if not the military preparations. If I hadn't created this emotional strain in the Serbian people, nothing would have happened.

My party and I lit the fuse of Serbian nationalism not only in Croatia but also throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. It's impossible to imagine an SDP (Serbian Democratic Party) in Bosnia-Herzegovina or a Mr Karadzic in power without our influence. We have driven this people and we have given it an identity. I have repeated again and again to this people that it comes from heaven, not earth."

The above declaration was made by Jovan Raskovic on the independent "Yutel" television channel in Belgrade. It was published in the *Vreme* and *Vjesnik* newspapers on January 24th 1992 — two months before the war broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A few months later, Raskovic died from a heart attack in Belgrade but not before he had appointed Radovan Karadzic and his government to be in charge of the Bosnian Serbs.

Interviews with Serbian soldiers document that psychiatric drugs were forced on these soldiers to make them aggressive. The administration of these drugs to the soldiery goes a long way to explain the bestial behaviour of Serb soldiers which has so shocked the world.

What has happened to the Moslems in Bosnia is a mirror image of what had occurred in Nazi Germany. The very chilling parallels include the creation by psychiatrist Ernst Rudin of the psychiatric pseudo-science which was used to "justify" Hitler's extermination of psychiatric patients and ethnic minorities. The reflection of earlier history even includes the fact that Hitler himself was a psychiatric patient addicted to psychiatric drugs.

There is more psychiatric involvement than just the setting up of the emotional conflicts to create the war and then the psychiatric drugging of Serbian troops to ensure that they were sufficiently inhuman to operate in the many rape camps. We must also consider the background of the "peace negotiator" Lord Owen (formerly Dr David Owen) who continuously obfuscated the reality of the situation with such remarks as "Things are complex, crimes have been perpetrated by all sides, including Croats and Moslems." From his autobiography "Time to Declare," we see that at the

beginning of his career he was working for William Sargant, the neuropsychiatrist, who was known world-wide for physical treatments in psychiatry, especially electroshocks and lobotomies which he developed throughout England with David Owen. Sargant was involved in "brainwashing" experiments coincident with those carried out by several bodies for the CIA and British Intelligence by the Tavistock Centre among others (covered widely in press reports in the 70s). Owen describes Sargant as "... a dominating personality with the therapeutic courage of a lion, author of a best selling book on brainwashing called *Battle for the Mind* ..."

Fortunately psychiatrists speaking at our Society meetings have shown clearly that not all support the direction their profession has taken. On the contrary, together with world-famous professor of psychiatry, Thomas Szasz, they are the brave souls who expose the failings from within. These are the shining lights who also support individual freedom. However the degree of psychiatric involvement in the calamities in Germany and Bosnia and their other connections cannot be all coincidence.

The psychiatric aim to eliminate considerations of right and wrong is totally opposed to the Society for Individual Freedom's aim to support the freedom and responsibility of the individual. In this respect we should also look more closely at the way society has been influenced in this century. This has included the introduction of psychiatric drugs to street culture, the introduction of materialistic psychiatric ideas into education, the elimination of the concept of right and wrong in the condoning of criminals as sick and the refusal to maintain long-term records as these would expose any harm or lack of positive results from "treatments."

THE INTERFERING TENDENCY

Paul Anderton

The publicity over the Julia Somerville incident, in early November '95, reminded me of some enquiries I made from Boots a few months before. (Julia Somerville and her partner, a Mr Dixon, were arrested and detained for about 7 hours as a result of a worker in Boots photographic developers reporting that they had apparently taken photographs of a naked child in the bath. It turned out that Mr Dixon was a keen photographer and the child was Ms Somerville's daughter.)

A friend of mine, Diane, was somewhat surprised that Boots photographic department at their Sheffield High Street shop had refused to develop some photographs of herself on the grounds that they were "indecent." As she is a mature woman of over 50 and the photographs were taken by a female friend of hers of similar vintage, I must say I was surprised. In fact Diane got the photographs developed by an independent processor who (excellent fellow) said he would "do anything for art."

As it happened at very much the same time I read in the magazine *Bush Telegraph* that there had been instances of Boots drawing the attention of the police to some photographs apparently including cannabis plants. The suggestion was that the readers of *Bush Telegraph* should boycott Boots products in protest.

On enquiring about Boots policy from the managers of their City Centre shops I obtained two different opinions. The manager of the photographic shop in Market Square said their policy was that if anything illegal was apparently going on, in

a photographed event, the police should be invited to see the photograph. The manageress of the photo centre in the High Street shop (the actual person who had refused prints of Diane's photographs) said the policy was that staff could refuse to develop photographs which offended them. I also drew this lady's attention to the item in the magazine which she photocopied and told me she would send it to Boots public relations department who would contact me. No response to this so far.

The Society has campaigned for many years for free-market economics and individual freedom, largely on the grounds that these were intimately connected. Recent history has shown that the free market delivers economic prosperity better than any other system so far discovered or devised, and material prosperity is certainly an important aspect of individual freedom. But not by any means all of it.

In any case material prosperity means supplying the goods and services people clearly want because they are prepared to pay for them (often in contrast to what they say they want when they expect somebody else to pay). That is the other important freedom aspect of the market — you can have anything you want if you can pay enough to divert the resources for it from alternative uses.

Of course there is an implied obligation on everybody to maintain the obviously basic requirements of civilisation. This applies presumably without serious argument to such crimes as murder, assault, theft, fraud and "false witness" — say

roughly the six serious Commandments (the famous ten minus the first four on religious conformity).

Presumably the employees of business firms are in general agreement with this and don't need reminding about it as part of company policy (does any company tell its employees that it is "policy" to report any discoveries of murder, theft, assault, or rape?).

But what of those areas of "public policy" — meaning government policy probably considerably influenced by purely political factors and lobby groups — where there isn't general agreement? The distinction is clear enough — there is no serious organised dissent from what can be taken for granted — which is why it is taken for granted, of course — whereas there is serious dissent from some other areas of policy such as so-called pornography and "drug abuse" in particular.

This should raise serious questions in "capitalist" enterprises. Is their prime purpose to provide what customers want or to act as agents of government policy and "copper's narks"? Presumably if an employee saw a photograph of say, an apparently murdered body being dismembered or somebody being seriously assaulted, whether child or adult,

then they would let the police know about it as a matter of "common sense" irrespectively of company policy.

If major companies are being induced to waste their time and resources on reinforcing dubious policies, then one of their main freedom-supporting functions is being undermined. With the government spending over 40% of GNP and companies such as Boots doing a lot of government-related business, particularly in connection with the NHS, this is seriously possible.

Evidently the employee who informed the Press about the Somerville "obscene" photographs was sacked, but for entirely the wrong reasons. One of the main useful functions of "celebrities" is to draw attention to circumstances that might remain unremarked if they were not involved. How many "ordinary" people have been quietly intimidated by visits from the "vice" or drug squad requiring "explanations" for the contents of photographs which no sensible person would consider dubious in any way? We now know the sort of thing that goes on.

Whether that was his intention or not, the employee who drew attention to the situation actually performed an important service.

LA FAMILLE EN DANGER

Helen Szamuely

Despite the constant presence of the family in most people's lives, it is officially dying. Or, at least, marriage is, though the two ought not to be confused. The family is rather a peculiar institution, in that in a way it is an anti-institution. It has significance only if it grows and develops of its own accord, in response to economic and social changes. It is the individual's last-ditch defence against the State which, consequently, has done its best in this century to destroy it. It is also a defence against other manipulative ideologues and consequently is now seriously under threat from two sides.

There is the danger from the left; from the equality planners, the gender feminists, and the social engineers who want to destroy it in order to create a society according to their own vision.

Almost more insidious is the danger from the right; from people who proclaim themselves to be the defenders of the family but who want to construct it and use it for their own form of social engineering. They are the people who talk of "the traditional nuclear family," by which they presumably mean two adults, married to each other, and their two or three children with perhaps exception being made for the child of a single parent virtuously adopted.

There is nothing traditional about such a family. Marriage has had a chequered history in this country as a study of Professor Lawrence Stone's books will confirm. The nuclear family as described has existed at most since the fifties. The traditional family is the extended one which has virtually disappeared in Britain (except for some immigrant communities) because of easy mobility, greater wealth as well as interference from the State through housing policies and provision of welfare. A reform in pension and other allowances will probably restore some of the traditional ties.

The concept and institution of family goes beyond mere number crunching. Otherwise we should have to

reprimand couples without children. One day they will be a drain on society, and they are not producing taxpayers to replace them. Not having children means not investing in the future of society. If they cannot have children maybe they could adopt. Although most single mothers keep their babies, there is a pool of potential adoptees. We should have to get rid of a great deal of red tape and all the politically correct nonsense that clogs up the process, though this may not be to the taste of those who are urging single mothers to put children up for adoption. If the biological mother is not good enough to bring up a child, if the natural family unit is to be broken up, how much more carefully will the potential adopters have to be checked. A large proportion of those children may well have to stay in children's homes, their chance of having a family themselves destroyed by social engineers of various hues.

We do not have to look to the Victorians to see what some of the ideas that are bandied about by the supposed defenders of the family will lead to. One can argue about the reality of the Victorian family indefinitely. Let us look at the State which mounted the most powerful assault on the family and on private life in the twentieth century: the Soviet Union.

This assault came in two parts. The first, better known Bolshevik one began in 1917 and lasted until the end of the twenties. The Bolsheviks considered quite openly the family to be their worst enemy and they set out to destroy it. Every individual, particularly women, would have to be "liberated" to participate in the construction of their new world. During those years marriage was set aside by law as being unimportant, abortion became completely legal, illegitimacy dismissed. More than that, women were encouraged to place their children in homes, to hand upbringing and education over to the State. Most of this was theoretical, since the majority of the Russian people, the peasants, preferred to stick to traditional social ties, especially as the promised

wondrous State nurseries, kitchens, and laundries, that were going to liberate women from domestic into industrial drudgery never materialised. The children's homes in existence were for the most part death traps.

In any case, official attitudes changed in the early thirties and the second phase of the assault began. By 1936 divorce was virtually abolished and abortion banned. With the bloodletting of collectivisation behind him and the purges ahead of him, Stalin could not afford to have women aborting potential citizens. In an article in *Trud* he explained that the question of children was far too important to be left to the parents themselves. It had to be decided by the State. Many of the ideologues of the family may well agree with him, although they would probably substitute "society" for the State. Incidentally, Stalin introduced another law that might appeal to those who think the young have got out of hand: he lowered the age of capital punishment to 12.

One cannot pretend that a system which encourages family members to report on each other and denies it the fundamental right of making decisions about children can be said to value it, though women's domestic role was glorified. Stalin, however, recognised that the family could be used to control individuals and to construct the sort of society he

wanted. There were other interesting aspects to the Stalinist family. Illegitimacy did become a matter for shame. It was marked on the birth certificate and in a country where this document had to be presented rather often one could not get away from the knowledge of it. The shame was entirely the child's and the mother's. An edict in 1944 made it quite clear that fathers had no responsibility. There were no welfare provisions and no new housing. Young couples stayed with their in-laws because there was nowhere else to go and consequently family goodwill was strained to the utmost. Unfortunately there were rather a lot of single mothers who lived in mortal fear of shame and ostracism if anybody found out where their husbands had disappeared to.

In the fifties and sixties divorce and abortion became possible and the numbers of both shot up catastrophically. Clearly all those years of family creation by decree had not encouraged an organic growth of it. However, one thing has to be said: through a combination of legal semi-discrimination, a certain prudishness, and lack of privacy, the illegitimacy rate went down. Whether all this social engineering that ostensibly preserved the family created a cohesive society in which people feel any lasting loyalties is more questionable.

IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Avedon Carol

It's a funny thing. During the six years that Feminists Against Censorship has existed, the debate on censorship — particularly of pornography — has opened up considerably. When we first got together, it seemed like you couldn't question the issue at all — pornography was just plain bad, and censorship was the answer to all problems. The first members of FAC to speak in public were barely allowed to utter a word, so quickly were they pounced on by "feminist" opponents who assumed that anyone who would defend the freedom of expression of pornographers could only be an evil exploiter of blacks and women. That situation no longer pertains.

Yet at the same time, the government seems to have become increasingly rabid about suppressing sexual material, and the Labour Party is right behind it in calling for stricter laws and enforcement. Rhetoric and lies about the prevalence of violent pornography and child porn just heats up more and more, along with increases in false claims about new agreement from academics that pornography and violent material are proven to be harmful. These are accompanied by slanders of those who dispute such claims; thus Guy Cumberbatch, author of the Home Office's 1990 report on pornography, which found that there was no evidence linking pornography and violence, is dismissed as having been "pro-porn" to start with (a favourite tactic of the National Viewers and Listeners Association), and anti-porn "feminists" have been telling journalists that Feminists Against Censorship's literature "advocates sex with children and animals." (We're offering a prize to anyone who can find this passage in any of our texts, by the way.)

That in itself would be no problem, but the government seems to need no reason at all further to strengthen the position against pornography in law. For

example, it has recently begun moves to ban reception of non-terrestrial television broadcasts of sexual material from continental Europe, despite the fact that the relevant authorities have received not one single complaint about the sex TV channels. And Virginia Bottomley seems to be announcing yet another crackdown on "pornography" (whatever that may mean) almost weekly.

The private sector has been nothing if not helpful. The established soft core publishers themselves have no love for their more adventurous colleagues and are rumoured to be the primary source of "tips" to the police about smaller publishers or distributors who *may* be breaching the Obscene Publications Acts — in other words, the law appears to be in use by them to stamp out possible competition. Meanwhile, Boots the Chemist and Kodak are notifying the police when they think your rolls of film contain material that might transgress the law, or at least the strictures of the most puritanical version of morality.

Normally, the tabloids are not merely behind the government and the police in such campaigns, but actually lead them. It would not be going too far to say that *The Daily Mail* and *News of the World* are the real legislative bodies in this country. The *Mail* has been the principal campaigner against the Playboy Channel and TV Erotica, despite the fact that the public in general has shown no interest in seeing those channels banned.

But when TV presenter Julia Somerville was dragged to the police station in late 1995 after Boots reported that she and her partner had brought "child porn" to them to be developed, the tabloids got it right for once, refusing to be taken in by the prurient assumption that any photo of a nude child could be assumed to be child pornography. The photos, they explained, just showed Somerville's young daughter playing with shaving foam in the bath. In the light of the public response to this, Boots hastily announced that it was Kodak, and not they, who had notified the authorities (and the press) of the photos.

Personally, I was relieved when I saw the headlines. For years I have been telling audiences that this is where the child porn scare has been leading, but by and large people simply refuse to believe that innocent material of this nature is what is drawing the attention of the police. I doubt this means the police themselves will be showing restraint, but at least perhaps now people will believe me when I tell them that you can't trust the guardians of morality to restrict their investigations to real offences against children.

But I wonder how much help it will be to others who have been caught in the trap. Earlier in 1995, a teacher was convicted for possession of child pornography when a copy of a well-known sex education book, *Show Me*, was found in his home. Even I found this remarkable. *Show Me* was released to wide acclaim in the 1970s; it was published in several languages, distributed worldwide, and reviewed favourably by educators and feminists alike. Indeed, I seem to recall *MsMagazine* touting it as heralding a new, enlightened view of sex education for children.

The recent case only confirms my fear that even sex education is going to be buried by the child porn scare. God knows that hardly a season goes by without some new "scandal" in the *Mail* or *News of the World* about some sex educator who had the poor taste to answer a young person's questions honestly. In fact, *News of the World* was outraged when a magazine aimed at pubescent girls actually published an article about menstruation, a subject they felt such girls were too young for!

I've recently heard from some publishers that their photographers are reporting problems with Kodak, who are now refusing to process some of the materials they were happy to develop before, if they have sexual content. You'll have to switch to Fuji, it seems, if you still want to take sexy colour photos.

Meanwhile, the police have been going after kinky people with a vengeance. Clubs for fetishists have been raided repeatedly, as have "gay" clubs, along with small publishers and distributors of erotic materials. In one case the Crown Prosecution Service asked for and received a destruction order on material carried by a small distributor — material that is easily found at W.H. Smith's, including books from Virgin's Nexus line. That's Richard Branson's Virgin, remember.

Needless to say, 1995 was, in the main, a tough year for anti-censorship activists. It wasn't all bad, though — for one thing, two books by anti-censorship feminists were released from major publishers in the States, and shouldn't be too hard to find in the UK.

The first of these, *Defending Pornography* (Scribner — released in the UK by Little Brown) by Nadine Strossen, president of the American Civil Liberties Union, carefully dissects the anti-porn analysis and shows it up for the ultimately sexist and punitive philosophy it really is. Strossen is a legal scholar and carefully documents every claim she makes. There are few more authoritative sources for information on how the porn wars have taken shape, and what it all means. Moreover, Strossen's gives horrifying examples of "feminist" analysis gone mad — my favourite is the quotation from a musicologist who explains that Beethoven's 9th symphony is actually about rape. And Strossen is, unequivocally, a feminist.

The second book is *XXX: A Woman's Right to Pornography* (St. Martin's Press), by well-known individualist feminist Wendy McElroy. In addition to a useful re-statement of the anti-censorship feminist position and an insightful analysis of the Dworkin-MacKinnon anti-porn ordinance, the author provides some invaluable documentation with the results of interviews with the women who really appear in professional pornography. The book does contain a few significant flaws — McElroy virtually ignores the long history of anti-censorship feminism that has always been a part of the movement and was once the *only* feminist position, for one thing, but it is also a mistake to lump all anti-censorship women together as individualists, a description that doesn't sit well when applied to someone like science fiction author (and last time I looked, Marxist) Joanna Russ.

But don't let that stop you. Both of these books are well worth reading, even if you have to order them specially from the US. Put them on your reading list and give yourself a treat.

Avedon Carol is the author of *Nudes, Prudes and Attitudes: Pornography and Censorship* (New Clarion Press, Gloucester, 1994), and a founding member of Feminists Against Censorship.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Michael Plumbe

Surcharging Local Councillors

I was wrong in a recent column in writing that Local Government councillors had **newly** acquired the right to avoid being surcharged if they acted in the belief that the related expenditure in question was authorised by law. A colleague tells me that councillors in fact appear already to have had this right when the Local Government Act of 1972 came in, and that the Local Government Finance Act of 1981/2 repeats the clauses. As far as my colleague knows, these clauses still apply. I quote, and paraphrase, comment or condense in:

"13.-(1) Where it appears to the auditor carrying out the audit of any accounts ... that any item of account is contrary to law he may apply to the court for a declaration that the item is contrary to law except where it is sanctioned by the Secretary of State (S. of S.).

"-(2) On an application under this section the court may [make such a declaration] and (a) order that any person responsible for incurring or authorising any expenditure declared unlawful shall repay it in whole or in part (b)

"-(3) The court shall not make an order under subsection (2)(a) or (b) above if the court is satisfied that the person responsible for incurring or authorising any such expenditure acted reasonably or in the belief that the expenditure was authorised by law, and in any other case shall have regard to all the circumstances, including that person's means and ability to repay that expenditure or any part of it."

If you or I act illegally, ignorance of the law is no defence. Also I doubt if the court would take much notice of a plea of "reasonableness" or inability to pay. Paradoxically, failure to pay dues to the local Council is about the only "debt offence" for which I can be sent to prison.

Why on earth should local councillors have special exoneration from the ordinary law of our country? They of all people should take special pains as spenders of public money to be sure that what they do is lawful. They have easy access to expert legal advice (at our great cost) for assistance in this. They should be hit hard if they fail in their duty, not exculpated.

It is intriguing to see also that if the S. of S. has sanctioned expenditure by councillors which turns out to be unlawful, we, the public, have no redress. Is the Minister also above the law applicable to lesser mortals? It seems so.

While on the topic of local government, let me comment here on the huge increases being grabbed now by councillors for attendance allowances and expenses. First I would say that the statements in the next paragraph must all be qualified with "in general; there are exceptions."

My own view is that the people best able to run local authorities (and for that matter central government) are those who are of independent means. (Alternatively, they could be people specifically trained, and highly paid, for the job. This however would not work in a "democracy," and would be costly.) The present system means that amateurs, often power-hungry, take over huge organisations, and then impose regimes of spending and "people-control" based on ideology alone. Also, party politics and the imposition of "whips" make it very difficult for issues to be properly decided on merit, and for individuals to make their own decisions.

I would prefer to pay politicians nothing.

By the way, there was a delightful comment by Auberon Waugh in the *Daily Telegraph* recently. I quote: "Another hazard of emptying our mental hospitals [into the community] is that so many would-be patients are drawn into local government."

Enforcing the Maastricht Treaty

A curiously similar situation on official law-avoidance was reported in *The Times* on 26/10/95. Here, Duddridge and Others (UK citizens) sought a judicial review of the S. of S. for Trade & Industry's decision not to issue regulations under the 1989 Electricity Act restricting the electromagnetic fields from electric cables being laid or to be laid as part of the national grid. Phew!

In other words the plaintiffs considered they had suffered or were soon to suffer damage by having cables installed too near their houses. The plaintiffs cited an Article in the Maastricht Treaty stating "Community policy on the environment ... shall be based on the precautionary principle ...," and claimed that this policy statement placed a duty on the S. of S. He should have conformed and set up precautionary rules stipulating the safe distance from cables to housing. He failed to do so. Thus the plaintiffs had no recourse in law against the cable-layers, there being no statutory reference point on which they could base their complaint.

"Tough!" said the Court of Appeal. An Article in the Maastricht Treaty does not of itself place any obligation on any organ of a national government. The use of the future tense in the Article means that the Article does not of itself create policy. Policy can only be created by the promulgation of a Directive by the organs of the Community: the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament.

Both in Community law and in what little remains of our own law, the law-givers build in protection for themselves, it seems. When they then break or fail to follow the law, we poor citizens can do nothing, absolutely nothing.

Members in the News — Superfluous Legislation

Let me quote Christopher Booker and Richard North in the *Daily Mail*, 2/10/95:

"Accountant Robert Maas [SIF member] provides another example of how officials use the Government's deregulation policy as an excuse to bring in more regulations.

"In the past, when a company ceased trading and had no assets, it was only necessary to explain this by a letter to the Companies Registry, and 'in due course the Registrar would strike it off the register,' says Mr Maas.

"But as a result of the Government's recent Deregulation Act, it is necessary to ask the Registrar for an official form; to have this completed by the company; to file the form with the Registrar; and to send a copy of the form to every person who is a shareholder, employee, creditor or director of the company.

"Furthermore, it becomes a criminal offence to submit the application if the company has changed its name or ceased trading within the previous three months.' Mr Maas adds. 'I had always understood deregulation to be synonymous with simplification. It is now apparent that this is not the case, and the word means the exact opposite; the imposition of additional and unnecessary burdens on business.'"

There is far too much law being created now where one can inadvertently become an offender simply by failing to follow convoluted and needless procedures. There is far too much law being created, full stop.

A recent cartoon in *The Times* shows a hapless taxpayer facing a team of Inland Revenue investigators. One investigator says: "Be ever mindful — you are guilty till proven guilty."

Members in the News — Black and White IQs

Initiated by Peregrine Worsthorne, there was quite a lively debate in the *Sunday Telegraph* on the genetic differences and differences of IQ between races. Professor Antony Flew [SIF member] made a valuable contribution to this in a letter printed on 29/10/95:

"Certainly no one but the most infatuated bigot ever has believed that ALL blacks are genetically inferior to ALL whites. But it is a very different thing to maintain what is in fact the very well evidenced proposition that there is a substantial difference between the AVERAGE IQs of blacks and of whites.

"This fact provides, of course, no warrant whatsoever for discriminating either in favour or against any individual, black or white. But what it does do is to make it virtually certain that, absent all racist discrimination whether negative or positive, blacks will be proportionately under-represented in some fields of activity and over-represented in others."

I am so glad that someone has actually had the courage to say this in print, and that the newspaper included Professor Flew's letter. There should be no need for suppression of proper debate on this matter. In the USA, a magazine called *American Renaissance* is circulated by subscription through the post. This magazine is published solely for discussion on matters of race, differences between races, discrimination, migration, asylum and similar topics. Would that there were a similar publication available here. No doubt the CRE would do their best to suppress it and to stop newsgroups handling it, but they probably could not prevent private circulation and the greater debate which might be generated thereby. (I am indebted to Professor Flew for comment and information here.)

The "politically correct" Army

Richard Littlejohn, writing in the *Daily Mail* on 1/12/95, has a sardonic article entitled "You're in the (politically correct) Army now, boys." He says the Army is sending out 120,000 pamphlets to serving soldiers, emphasising its commitment to equal opportunities. All recruits are being ordered to attend anti-sexism and anti-racism courses.

No longer is the Sergeant Major allowed to address people as Lofty or Native or Char Wallah. No longer may he refer to physical attributes such as a fine pair of shoulders. Yet one piece of sexual discrimination persists with the full weight of law. If the Sergeant Major comes across a "pooffer" or a butch lady, he can have them thrown out of the Army.

This is a topic which generates sharply divided opinions even amongst libertarians. I shall be interested to see if any members write in protest to the Editor about my comment. Incidentally, if homosexuals are to be kept out of the Services, should they not also be kept out of prisons? In the Services (other than aboard most ships), men have access to women and vice versa, so "natural" choices can be made. By contrast, there is much evidence to show that homosexual activity is greatly increased if a group of men or women are confined together with no access to the opposite sex, as happens in prisons. Perhaps this is an argument for "mixed-sex" prisons? (Mind you, I **hate** "mixed-sex" wards in hospitals.)

Recently the Police published some statistics showing that young black men were more likely to get into trouble with the law than any other group of people. The Police have been much lambasted for bringing this out. Yet, surely, if we are aware of a problem, we have a chance of putting things right. Hiding facts under the carpet does no good at all.

Parliamentarian of the Year

Elsewhere a report of our Fringe Meeting at the Conservative Party Conference is given. At this we were much impressed by the speech given by Richard Shepherd MP. My opinion is that an audience initially largely in favour of Identity (ID) Cards had its collective view quite changed by Mr Shepherd's eloquent condemnation of ID cards. Certainly he received loud applause from everyone present.

I am delighted to read that, at an annual awards ceremony organised by *The Spectator* and Highland Park Whisky (no, I have **not** been given a bottle myself — yet), Richard Shepherd won the Parliamentarian of the Year award.

Security Cameras

This is a difficult topic. Writing in the *Daily Mail* on 30/11/95, Andrew Neil refers to Government funding by Mr Kenneth Clarke in his budget for a further 10,000 video spy cameras. Andrew Neil gives examples of the misuse of such cameras and pleads for proper regulation of them.

My view is that the cameras have had a dramatic effect in reducing crime in some places, without undue intrusion on ordinary activities. By contrast, the introduction of Identity (ID) Cards might perhaps reduce crime levels, but there would be a gross intrusion on day-to-day life. There is a big difference between "passive" monitoring (the citizen needs to take no specific action in the monitoring process) and "active" monitoring (the citizen is obliged at all times to be directly involved by being forced to carry documentation).

The big worry about spy cameras is that they can be, and are, used to monitor private activity. In public places, no-one has any real right to complain if they are "caught" acting oddly. In my own home however I certainly could find it

embarrassing if a secret camera were to be installed. The trouble is, how does one define what is a public, and what is a private, place?

Let us try to compile a table:

Cameras:	Allowed	Maybe	No
Open street	X		
Shopping mall	X		
Shop or office with public access	X		
Roads, to curb speeding	X		
Roads, to curb bus-lane and parking (yellow-line) "offences"		X	
Open-plan ordinary office		X	
Lift with public access		X	
Military barracks		X	
Private office			X
Changing room			X
Private accommodation			X

Immediately anomalies arise. In one block of flats I visit, security cameras in the lifts have eliminated graffiti. Yet in a video published publicly recently a couple had been caught in a lift in a compromising position. People have been using changing rooms for drug dealing and having a crafty cigarette. Yet it would be embarrassing to be caught innocently scratching one's bum. Unsupervised yellow-lines could lead to much congestion. Yet many of us disobey yellow-lines in order to pop into a local shop; should (expensive) cameras be used to stop us?

In principle I would not favour further laws being introduced to govern the use of cameras. The law is generally far too rigid a tool for such a purpose. An attempt is made by the lawmakers to cover every situation in advance; this is patently absurd given the vagaries of human nature.

Having said this, the couple caught in the lift ought to have some redress in law and to be able easily to prevent their activities being shown to the nation. (Andrew Neil suggests at least a performance fee might be due. This could of course give rise to an increase in immoral earnings.) If possible I would much prefer to see existing law tested through the courts before further law is considered. However it may be that extra law is actually needed given the new technology and problems. I do hope any such law is very carefully drafted and planned before being enacted. Given the recent performance of the lawmakers, I would have little confidence that this will happen. We shall simply get another unworkable Dangerous Dogs Act.

British Weights & Measures Association

Our President Lord Monson and our former Chairman Sir Richard Body recently attended an inaugural meeting of the British Weights & Measures Association (BWMA), hosted by its Chairman, Vivian Linacre. This association is dedicated to the repeal of the law which makes it a criminal offence to use old measuring systems by themselves (one is allowed to quote feet and inches as long as the metric values are shown first and in larger print). It seems only our country has introduced criminality into what should be free choice.

Guests of honour at the meeting were Luigi Pragliola, the Peterborough publican who refused to change his optics, and Bruce Robertson of Trago Mills in Cornwall, who will not abandon feet and inches.

A newsletter, *The Yardstick*, is published by the BWMA, and a leaflet setting out the Association's case is available on request. Write to me for details.

THE CONSERVATIVE CONFERENCE (October 1995)

Paul Anderton

The Society's meeting

The Society hosted a fringe meeting on Thursday, 12th October at the Blackpool Conservative Conference on the subject of "Identity Cards — The European Dimension." The meeting was chaired by Michael Plumbe.

Peter Wakley, the Society's specialist on ID cards, spoke first to give a brief account of the Society's views and action taken. The three MP guests, John Tomlinson, Nick Budgen, and Richard Shepherd, then gave their views.

John Tomlinson admitted being a late convert to "Euroscepticism" but had no serious objection to identity cards which were compulsory in most European countries. He did, of course, call for adequate safeguards against bureaucratic abuse. They should be seriously considered if the advantages were clear and worthwhile, both financially and in terms of improved crime detection and prevention.

Nick Budgen, in direct opposition to part of Mike Plumbe's introductory remarks about the principle of individual liberty and containment of State powers, asserted that principles were not of much use in practice. Some principles inevitably conflicted with others. He was prepared to trust to the traditional British system of general discussion and eventually muddling through with some sort of compromise which "works." In his view a voluntary system, possibly with compulsion in some areas, such as benefit claims, was worth trying.

Richard Shepherd made some fun of Nick Budgen's approach — attributing it to his professional lawyer's habit of deliberately causing confusion. After considering the practical and financial costs of an ID scheme he came firmly down on the side of the principle that a truly free and autonomous individual should not be subject to government tagging.

The speakers then answered questions from the audience.

Several members of the audience said the arguments had changed their mind from pro- to anti-compulsory ID cards.

Literature and application forms from the Society and the Libertarian Alliance were distributed and the SIF obtained at least one new member who paid immediately in cash!

This was a much more successful meeting than the one in 1994 on Freedom of Information and many thanks are due to Adrian Lee for organising it and booking the speakers. Adrian also arranged for the inclusion of one of the few resolutions to the conference which were opposed to compulsory ID cards.

In general the conference can almost certainly be considered a success by the Government. The debates seemed to me to be better supported than at some previous conferences. All the ministerial speeches were obviously carefully prepared and delivered.

Other meetings

But again, as last year, the dominant topic was Euroscepticism and there were many fringe meetings on this subject. I attended one at Tuesday lunchtime, hosted by Conservative Youth Against a Federal Europe, to be addressed by Teresa Gorman, Sir Teddy Taylor, and John Wilkinson, each of whom can generally be relied upon to fill a meeting. But there were in fact only about 30 in the audience because Brian Mawhinney had gone well over time with his speech — also delaying the BBC 1 pm news, much to the annoyance of the Labour Party. This was suspected by

some as a deliberate attempt to sabotage the "Eurosceptic" fringe meetings — but later information was that the delay was due to trouble with the tele-prompter on which all principal speakers depend heavily (which rather supports the view that apparently Machiavellian tricks are actually more likely to be examples of cock-ups than conspiracies!). Unfortunately at least one journalist attributed the poor attendance at this meeting to "the virtual demise of the Young Conservatives." A hasty conclusion, completely unjustified.

In the evening there were two further "right-wing" meetings. The first, hosted by the Freedom Association, was addressed by seven of the eight MPs who had the whip withdrawn for not voting for the Maastricht treaty; Teresa Gorman, Richard Shepherd, Christopher Gill, Nicholas Budgen, Tony Marlow, John Wilkinson, and Sir Teddy Taylor. During the subsequent question session a young woman asked a clearly hostile question on the lines of "how could a small country such as Britain survive without being part of Europe?." She received four polite and considered replies from the panel which was a pleasing contrast to some fringe meetings where unsympathetic questioners just get a one sentence "put-down" and are then ignored.

The second meeting was hosted by the European Foundation and chaired by Bill Cash MP. The principal speaker was the Rt. Hon. John Redwood MP who gave a very well-received speech, again largely on "Eurosceptic" topics.

Identity cards

On the specific topic of ID cards it was interesting that they were **not** mentioned at all — in contrast to 1994 when the possible introduction of ID cards was mooted several times in major debates. It also received support in the period between conferences. My constituency association runs a monthly supper club, usually addressed by a local MP, and without exception these MPs mentioned ID cards favourably in their addresses — it is virtually certain that they had been briefed to do so by Party managers.

Since the 1995 conference I have attended only one such "pep talk" when the subjects were: law and order, the constitution, Europe, and tax cuts. No mention of ID cards at all. It seems the subject is temporarily dead. This may be due to the public response to the Home Office invitation for comments on the Green Paper — closing date 30th September 1995. The SIF had included in its response to this invitation a note to the effect that it hoped the closing date, before the major party conferences, did not imply that general public support — if that were indeed expressed — was going to be used at the Conservative conference as an excuse for announcing the introduction of an ID card scheme. So either there has not been sufficient support, or the SIF comments have been noted.

Since then it has been announced that a driving licence "identity card" — including photograph — will be introduced in 1996, *and that non-drivers will be able to obtain one for identification purposes*. This needs careful watching as it could easily be the precursor of a universal compulsory scheme. Even if compulsory ID cards have been, at least temporarily, abandoned as an immediate objective, other Home Office schemes remain a major source of dissatisfaction with Government policy.

Home affairs and crime

It has been observed, by people with a much greater knowledge of political history than mine, that Michael Howard is the worst Home Secretary since 1782 because of his unmatched hatred of Common Law, and worship of absolute arbitrary power. I certainly hope this is true or some of the others must have been truly awful.

Home Affairs debates are usually the most depressing Conference experience. The Home Secretary struggles to convince anybody who can suspend critical faculties, that he has managed to achieve a combination of policies which can satisfy the demands of progressives, who think the universal solution to problems is more government spending on social engineering, and the "Blimps and Blue Rinses," who think it is in bigger and better punishments.

Both are wrong, of course. But no Home Secretary dare mention, or consider, that, because it would also mean considering the solution these Statists fear as a vampire fears the daylight — that we could all manage much better without them at all.

If the desire to reduce government spending is ever taken seriously and the necessary action taken — that most Government departments should be completely closed down as suggested before in *The Individual* — the Home Office would be a good place to start. It converts just about everything it touches into a disaster area from hanging Mrs Thompson in 1924, through fawning on America over drugs and pornography, to shameless cover-ups of miscarriages of justice and chaos over immigration. And this is certainly due to its internal "culture" of totally inappropriate certainty and self-righteousness combined with insufferable arrogance so characteristic of the legal system in general.

I watched the 1995 debate from a gallery behind the platform, observing Michael Howard on a video monitor, and the audience directly. Inevitably this produced the "what am I doing here?" reaction. Our esteemed Home Secretary milked every chance of applause from the over-represented "Blimps and Blue-Rinses," all bright-eyed and adoring, as they grabbed every chance vicariously to indulge their ignorant self-righteousness on the victims of previous Home Office and Education Department failed "initiatives."

This time the initiative was to get as many people in prison as possible and see that dangerous ones don't get out even with IRA help. Extra spending was required only on prison, rather than social, engineering. Spectacular results have been observed since in changes in prison rules — physical contact between prisoners and visitors now forbidden and expectant prisoner mothers chained to their bed until

actually in labour. I, for one, will sleep more peacefully as a result of these belated reforms.

Michael Howard and his admirers might think they are being tough on crime but they are still a very easy touch for the really professional approved pickpockets (PAPs) such as the Police Federation, Prison Officers Association, Chief constables, BMA, Prison Governors, and Home Office mandarins.

Minister What is the position now?

PAP As you have come to expect, Minister, we have been working with great industry, dedication, and sincerity in all areas of our concern.

Minister Good. So the problems are solved, are they?

PAP Well, not exactly. I'm afraid there are now even more — due, of course, to factors completely outside our control.

Minister Oh dear. So what can we do about that?

PAP The first essential is increased resources of course. More facilities, increased staff, better pay.

Minister But that could be difficult. Everybody wants economies and less tax.

PAP Don't worry, Minister. We will feed the scare-mongering and hate-mongering media with some dramatic material about terrible happenings, increased dangers, and the imminent collapse of society. Then neither you nor the Chancellor will be able to resist overwhelming public demand for "something to be done." Turkeys will vote for Christmas if they are scared enough.

Minister Super idea. You do your bit and I'll do mine. The more my department spends the more important I am.

Statism

But if Home Affairs and Education are the lowest point in providing value for tax money or sensible and coherent ideas then the rest must be better. With the average age of Party members being somewhere around 60 it is perhaps not entirely surprising that some serious traces of authoritarian and Statist ideas, so popular during and just after the Second World War, still linger in the older generation.

Time will inevitably reduce the numbers so affected, certainly absolutely and, hopefully, relatively as well. If the widely forecast Labour government does emerge sometime during the next couple of years then the membership of the Tory party will blossom as it always does after the experience of Labour government. The new and inevitably younger members might well query the traditional "throw good money after bad" habits and insist on both less government and workable policies for what remains.

ECSTASY AND AGONY

Raymond Paul

The death of the teenager Leah Betts on 16th November '95, was certainly a tragedy. It was apparently a result of taking one ecstasy tablet on her 18th birthday. However, the publicity surrounding it left a lot to be desired in terms of balance and objectivity.

As we were often reminded, the use of ecstasy (methyldioxy-methamphetamine or MDMA) among teenagers is very widespread, estimates of around 250,000 regular users being widely quoted. As virtually all of these are still alive, ecstasy is obviously not fatal for the vast majority. In fact many pills

of the very similar "ordinary" amphetamine (popularly known as Dexedrine) were prescribed in the 1960s as a palliative for "depression" or as an aid to slimming. That was legal, of course, and prescribed by "approved" experts, so any deaths would attract little, if any, media attention and would almost certainly have been recorded as "misadventure."

Instead Leah's death was pounced on by media and politicians as justification for their anti-drugs campaigns and demonisation of "pushers."

Neither seems to be aware of the implications of their attitudes.

For one thing, all that education which everybody is subjected to, with anti-drugs propaganda embedded in it, must be very ineffective. If pupils don't take much notice of that, perhaps we should not bother with much of the rest of it because it is evidently a waste of time and money. On the other hand perhaps they *have* taken in what they have been told about personal responsibility and making choices — and are applying it in their own way, just as every sensible person is supposed to do in a so-called "free democratic society."

Leah's tragedy was mentioned by a certain Judge Brooks at Snaresbrook Crown Court, East London (24th November '95). This was in the course of sentencing two men [Colin Mulkerrins and George Sansom] convicted of planning to supply cocaine into Britain. They got 30 years each. He used Leah Betts's death as an excuse for stating: "Those who choose to become involved in drug trafficking must be told in the clearest possible terms that the courts will show little or no mercy." A week or so later a burglar, who called himself "Lucifer" and claimed to worship the devil, got 27 years. He had stolen £1 million and terrorised most of his victims. His sentence was widely publicised on the grounds of its very surprising severity. Apparently using one's own money and efforts to supply something people want is over 10% more serious than systematic robbery and terrorism.

Again the implication is that somehow or other the so-called victims of drug pushers are completely without discrimination or the capability of rational choice and the assessment of risk/reward ratios. Where do these people come from?

Though I've met plenty of users of various sorts of drugs I've never found one who admitted to this shortcoming or who actually exhibited it in ordinary life.

And in over 20 years of canvassing for the political party at present in power — at least temporarily — I kept a lookout for any of them. Though all votes are precious it could obviously be very embarrassing if any such stupid and incompetent persons told their friends that they supported us — much better for them to abstain and keep quiet. I was a bit surprised that Central Office hadn't noticed this danger as well, and warned us about it. But in spite of the apparently large numbers — a quarter of a million on ecstasy for a start to say nothing of cannabis, coke, and heroin — they seem remarkably invisible.

Or it could be that we libertarians have actually been conned into looking at the wrong enemy. We have plugged away for ages pointing out that "addiction" — to natural products such as alcohol, tobacco, or opium — was not exactly a major disaster because it is relatively easy to live with, provided it is not accompanied by poverty, and "curable" by various methods particularly self-help; and that attempts at suppression actually make situations worse, particularly by encouraging adulteration of products and sloppy manufacturing.

These, and other verifiable facts, have been established many times over, yet with no discernible effect on the consciousness of people such as Judge Brooks. Though the judiciary is supposed to be independent, the independence is very limited. Independence of bribery and party political influence perhaps; but independence from the currently approved and fashionable establishment attitudes and assumptions, certainly not. If anything they guard them more assiduously than any other group, except, perhaps, the

government and prospective governments. Tony Newton (Chairman of the government Drugs Committee) once said something to the effect that no matter what the arguments were, the Government's policy on drugs (cannabis in particular) would not change. And Tony Blair (leader of the Labour Party) reacted to fellow MP Clare Short's suggestion that the legalisation of cannabis should be *discussed* by telling her, and by implication everybody else, to say nothing more on the subject. Judicial independence would be more convincing if it were independence from the Newton/Blair theory of modern government — "never mind the facts, just feed the hype."

And one of the most persistently "hyped" notions is that of the wise and benign protector of the public good, somehow embodied in leaders and legislators. The source of this wisdom is never actually revealed. It is left to be taken for granted by those people not used to asking questions about why the world is the way it is. And to maintain the illusion there have to be, in effect, no-go areas where balanced discussion is studiously avoided, so the "mystery" of superior wisdom can be maintained.

Granada TV have produced a video about Leah Betts and ecstasy. Called "Sorted ... Just an ordinary kid," it is distributed free to schools because "we believe open communication on issues which affect young people will help them to make more informed decisions about their own lives and actions."

But the Press Release for 12 December '95 definitely describes it as an "Anti-Drugs" video. And the "open communication" is somewhat biased. No interviews with the young, seen on several TV interviews, who said they considered Leah's death an unfortunate accident but it was not going to alter their attitude.

And the discussion of the *immediate* cause of Leah's death fell somewhat short of adequate. A doctor described it as "cerebral oedema" — swelling of, and consequent damage to, the brain by excessive water consumption. It was mentioned that Leah had taken ecstasy at least twice before without apparent harm, and that she believed that drinking water was necessary to avoid any ill-effects. In fact the water is only needed to replace perspiration resulting from strenuous dancing — so consuming so much in relatively inactive circumstances, such as a birthday party, was inappropriate.

If there had been a genuine desire to reduce dangers by "open communication," rather than to produce propaganda, then this would have been explained. Instead it was alleged that the drug interfered with the brain's function of controlling water balance. But that control hadn't failed before and there is obviously a practical upper limit which can be overwhelmed.

Significantly, perhaps the first question asked on the questionnaire form enclosed with the video is about feelings rather than thoughts. Thoughts are only required about whether the video was helpful or not and how to advise on drugs. No invitation to think about freedom of choice and levels of acceptable risk.

It is safe to conclude that what some people are really not prepared to show mercy to is anybody who actually asserts independence of them. Independence, that is, of cant, hypocrisy, and double-think.

Video available, price £3.99 from "SORTED, PO Box 10, Wetherby, Yorkshire, LS23 7EL."

REVIEWS

Betrayal of Trust

by Dr Vernon Coleman

Published by European Medical Journal

Reviewed by Peter Jackson

If, on reading this hard-hitting book, anyone suffers damage to their belief that medical treatment is founded on a firm scientific basis, then they can at least take comfort from the help it provides in avoiding unknown risks of injury — or worse.

Myths are exploded and abuses such as unscientific methods are exposed concerning Caesarean births, AIDS, various cancers, breast implants, vasectomies, psychosurgery, psychoanalysis, backaches, pain relief, suicides while being treated, drugs in general and even animal experiments.

A torrent of facts and arguments showing the unreliability and inapplicability of animal experiments was particularly interesting.

The claim is made that millions of humans are made ill or sometimes worse when medicines tested on animals are subsequently applied to human beings. The case against using medication which has been tested on animals for use by human beings seems irresistible. When these statements are combined with the other exposés, Dr. Coleman's extrapolation of Ministry figures showing that over a million patients a year are admitted to British hospitals because they have been made ill by medical treatment is now understandable.

Any large number of persons sufficiently harmed to necessitate hospitalization is a social problem not extirpated by the virtual elimination of TB, smallpox, cholera, typhoid, and diphtheria. Although medicine should not rest on its deserved laurels for past achievements, these successes should

have been mentioned because without that balance the exposes could prove too negative. Also, they would provide a perspective on a profession always seeking to maintain their expected rate of progress.

The author lists the provisions from drug industry money: lavish promotions to doctors both in general practice and in hospitals; the basic income for the world's 30,000 medical journals by means of both advertising and payment for "scientific" papers to be published; well over half the medical research done in universities and teaching hospitals; much of the training of doctors. "The inevitable result is that many of the people who decide whether new drugs are suitable for widespread use have received drug company money," and "... many of those employed by the regulatory authorities are also receiving drug company money."

The current "Doctor's dilemma" would seem to be to reconcile the public's expectation of a doctor scientist when, in truth, they are frequently forced to act without proper scientific foundation and information.

This book provides an interesting answer: "international computerised monitoring of side effects would cost very little to organise and would save thousands of lives."

This is very much in line with the recommendations of our Society (SIF). Perhaps we can assume that the author would support our call for long-term aims for drugs and treatments to be stated, and for the long-term results to be made available as soon as possible, first to doctors and second to patients. If, as Dr Coleman states, doctors have lost control of their profession to the drug companies, his solution combined with our recommendations would go a long way to recover it.

Due to space limitations other reviews have had to be held over for the next issue — apologies [Editor].

NOTICES

Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, 11 March 1996 at 5.45 for 6 pm in the Jubilee Room at the House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1. The Society's AGM will be followed by a short meeting of the National Council.

Please allow time for security checks when entering the Palace of Westminster by St. Stephen's entrance (if asked, you are going to Sir Richard Body's meeting) and please bring with you some means of identification.

Nominations, with the names, addresses and signatures of nominees, proposers and seconders, must be sent to the Society at 104 Drive Mansions, London SW6 5JH, to arrive not later than Monday, 4 March 1996. Nomination forms are available from there on request.

Agenda of the AGM:

1. Chairman's opening remarks.
2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Treasurer's Report.
5. Election of the following: (a) President, (b) Vice-Presidents, (c) Treasurer, (d) Chairman of the National Council, (e) members of the National Council, one-third of whom are due to retire while being eligible for re-election.

Subscriptions

If it is more than a year since you last paid your subscription, by banker's order or otherwise, renewal is due or overdue. In that case please send your cheque, or a banker's order form (available on request) to the Society without further delay. A prompt response from those concerned will be appreciated. Members who fail to renew cannot expect to receive *The Individual* in future.

Luncheon

It is proposed to hold a Luncheon in the **Palace of Westminster** in late May or early June 1996. Details will be published in our next issue.

The Society's meeting on 22nd November

The Society held a well-attended meeting at the Westminster Arms on 22nd November 1995. It was addressed by Dr James Le Fanu and Dr Tony Baker.

Both gave very interesting talks on the relationship between the medical profession and patients, with particular reference to the Society's interest in improved information.

It is hardly possible to do justice to these talks in a summary which can be accommodated in the space available,

but the following are, I think, the most significant points to members.

Dr James Le Fanu drew attention first to the inherent difficulty of people with expert knowledge dealing with, and particularly explaining, decisions to lay people. Indeed this difficulty was the basis of the professions with their regulations as to appropriate behaviour.

There can be considerable differences in individual professional opinions as well as attitudes of patients. Professional opinion is *not* always completely objective and patients vary from the completely trusting to the chronically sceptical. There were three sources of legitimate professional doubt and uncertainty.

First, the subject — human beings — was inherently complex and nobody could possibly understand everything.

Secondly, there was simply too much data and information for anybody to take in. Knowledge and experience were inevitably limited and this put an obvious restraint on truly impartial opinion.

Thirdly, doctors can actually deceive themselves about the effectiveness of certain high-profile and extensively promoted treatments. He gave the example of diverticulitis where the advice changed from low-fibre to high-fibre diet without particularly strong evidence.

Dr Tony Baker was concerned specifically with psychiatry. He was concerned by the power that psychiatrists could employ in certain cases. Detention and invasive treatments such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) could be imposed on patients in some circumstances. The power of detention was greater than that of judges in many ways.

Patient "consent," when given, was often obtained in "Hobson's choice" conditions — the patient was threatened with "sectioning" if he/she refused it. The two other professionals, a social worker and a GP, who had also to endorse any compulsion, as a "safeguard," could be manipulated without much difficulty — the social worker often by jargonised browbeating and the GP by astute deployment of professional loyalties.

He gave an example of a psychiatrist practising "within two miles" who used ECT as first line of treatment without explaining the alternatives. It can be difficult for any psychiatrist to challenge or resist ECT because they had all become committed to some extent by having "pushed the button" on some ECT machines during training. Over 2000 people a year are given "non-consensual" ECT. Though recommendations about this have been made, and accepted by other professionals such as nurses, they have not so far been accepted by psychiatrists.

The Rt. Hon. **Stephen Dorrell**, MP, Secretary of State for Health, in correspondence with the Society, mostly through Peter Jackson, has (at last?) expressed serious interest in our proposals for greater access to information for both patients and doctors on the long-term effects of treatments. We are now pursuing with the Secretary of State the practical means of obtaining reliable information.

Terra Libra is a freedom organisation based in the USA. I have been reading some of their literature, but find it rather difficult to decide what to make of it. This is probably due to my lack of serious commitment and careful attention which I hope to rectify by the time of the next issue of *The Individual*. Other members might find it interesting, though it is still American in outlook. More details from Brenda Goodwin, 90, Clifden Road, Clapton, London, E5 0LN — Paul Anderton.

Fourth World Review stands for "Small Nations, Small Communities and the Human Spirit" and is published every two months except for a double summer issue. It is edited by John Papworth, and the subscription rate is vague/optional. For a sample copy write to 24 Abercorn Place, London NW8.

Free Life is the quarterly magazine of the *Libertarian Alliance* and is edited by Sean Gabb who has contributed to *The Individual*. Interesting and original articles and reviews on freedom issues. £10 per annum from Libertarian Alliance, 25 Chapter Chambers, Esterbrooke Street, London, SW1P 4NN.

Resistance is a group which is active in London in support of the all-party and fast-growing Campaign for an Independent Britain. Enquiries to Brian Mooney, 30 Langthorne Street, London SW6 6JY. Tel: 0171 385 9757.

Right NOW! is "Uncensored, unabashed, 'politically incorrect,' intelligent," and famous contributors include Richard Lynn, Charles Moore, David Marsland, Garry Bushell, Antony Flew, John Redwood, Peter Robinson, Teresa Gorman, Roger Scruton, and PD James.

A wealth of informed, entertaining articles on race, culture, crime, welfare, Ulster and overseas developments in every issue. Subscription only £5 for one year (four issues) from : IN1, Right Now!, BCM Right, London, WC1N 3XX.

The Anti-Maastricht Alliance

The monthly talks continue at the Red Lion pub in Parliament Street (corner with Derby Gate), with yet more good speakers. Organiser: Dr Helen Szamuely (tel: 0181 740 7194). All talks start at 7 pm.

Wednesday, 14 February

Britain's global future

Professor Stephen Bush, Vice-Chairman of CIB

Wednesday, 13 March

How special is the British-American relationship?

Andrew McHallam, Director, Institute of European Defence and Strategic Studies

Wednesday, 17 April

The fallacy of monetary union

Dr Martin Holmes, Co-Chairman of the Bruges Group, economist and author

The Institute of Economic Affairs

The IEA's Occasional Lecture Series features notable academic speakers. The following lectures take place at 2 Lord North Street, London SW1, and start at 6.30 pm. **Those wishing to attend must book in advance**, and reservations are limited to the first 60 acceptances. For further details telephone 0171 799 3745.

Thursday, 7 March

Universities in the Knowledge Age

Sir Douglas Hague, CBE

Monday, 18 March

Bourgeois Virtue

Professor Deirdre McCloskey, University of Iowa and Erasmus University of Rotterdam

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The Power to Destroy

THE POWER TO DESTROY: a study of the British tax system, by D.R. Myddelton, is a devastating analysis of how taxes reduce the freedom of the individual and the creation of wealth. Published in 1994, it offers radical proposals to reduce taxation and public expenditure so as to increase freedom, wealth and welfare.

"I strongly commend Professor Myddelton's stimulating review of the continuing, widely damaging cost of government as the starting-point of a long-overdue national debate on the urgent need to restore wealth-creation above sterile 'redistribution' as the only lasting remedy for the most pressing economic, as well as social, problems." *Lord Harris of High Cross*.

"In 1950 as an average taxpayer you worked for two and a half weeks each year to pay your income tax. Today it is two and a half months. That's called progressive taxation. David Myddelton shows just how damaging the tax structure is to our economy: stifling incentive and growth; channelling our money into all the wrong things. This book should be read by everyone who has received either a pay slip or a tax demand and fumed about the amount being grabbed by the taxman." *Teresa Gorman MP*.

The 112-page book carries a foreword by our President, Lord Monson, and is written in a clear and witty style. It is completed with notes, references, a name index and a subject index. The hardback version is £9.95 a copy, while the paperback is £6.95 a copy, post-free from the Society for Individual Freedom, 104 Drive Mansions, London SW6 5JH..

SOCIETY FOR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

President: Lord Monson

Chairman of the National Council: Dr Barry Bracewell-Milnes

Chairman of the Executive Committee: Michael Plumbe, FCA

The Society was established in the 1940s by amalgamation of the Society of Individualists with the National League for Freedom. It is independent of all political parties, and relies entirely on voluntary subscriptions and donations.

We campaign for more personal freedom, less State control (including less taxation), and for genuinely free enterprise in place of protected State and private monopolies.

For example, in 1959 we launched the campaign for an 'Ombudsman' to protect the individual against bureaucratic maladministration, success coming in 1967 with the creation of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. In 1994 the Society published *The Power to Destroy: a study of the British tax system* by Professor D.R. Myddelton.

We hold luncheons, usually in one of the Houses of Parliament, as well as evening meetings, to which notable guest speakers are invited. All members receive the Society's newsletter, *The Individual*.

If you share our objectives and wish to support our work, please join us. Write or telephone and ask for a membership application form. The Society's address and telephone number are given below.

The Individual

Views expressed in *The Individual* are not necessarily those of the editor or of the Society but are printed as a contribution to debate. Letters are welcome, as are articles. All contributions should be sent to the editor: Paul Anderton, 15 Norfolk Park Drive, Sheffield S2 3QG.

The annual subscription for membership of the Society is £12. Those under 21 years of age may pay £6 (date of birth required). Cheques payable to the Society. A leaflet about the Society is available on request. Ask for a form for a banker's order if you would like to pay in this way.

Society for Individual Freedom

104 Drive Mansions, London SW6 5JH. Tel: 0171-371 7530